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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

155th Engineer Company changes command

RAPID CITY, S.D. - Capt. Kevin Huxford, Rapid City, will take command of the 155th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard during a change of command ceremony at 7 a.m. (MDT) on Saturday, August 4, at the Range Road National Guard Armory in Rapid City.

“This is an exciting time to be taking command in the National Guard,” said Huxford who is currently serving as the battalion logistical officer for the 153rd Engineer Battalion located in Huron, and works full time as a plans and programs specialist for the South Dakota Army National Guard in Rapid City.

Huxford said the mission of the 155th will be similar to years past, but the unit will now have the opportunity to grow both in strength and in three additional locations. He said he wants to ensure the unit continues to maintain its local presence with projects and support, which benefits the community and the unit’s Soldiers by providing training opportunities.

The 155th is currently headquartered in Rapid City with new detachments in Winner, Platte, and Wagner. The mission of the 155th Engineer Company is to provide vertical engineer support with plumbers, carpenters, electricians and block layers.

“One of the biggest challenges I had when I first came to the unit was creating a training plan that challenged the unit’s Soldiers,” said the outgoing commander, Capt. Tom Nelson of Sturgis, who works full time as a training administrator for the Plans and Operations Section, Joint Force Headquarters, in Rapid City.

“The 155th is a hard working unit that thrives on a challenge and the Soldiers enjoy showing what they can do,” he said.

Nelson said with the cooperation of the detachments senior noncommissioned officer, Sgt. 1st Class Eric Jennings, the unit’s leadership gradually transitioned the engineer unit to an organization with Soldiers who could independently plan, resource and execute projects with little or no involvement from the unit’s senior leadership.

Nelson said the engineers completed many community projects to include a maintenance building at the Canyon Lake Senior Center, a sidewalk at the Sturgis VFW, the annual CASA Playhouse project, and improvements at both the Coyote Den at Camp Rapid and the Boy Scout Camp in Custer.

“We also were tremendously successful in our support to the Southwest Border Patrol during Operation Jump Start,” said Nelson who said his biggest personal reward was being able to serve with a great group of Soldiers.

“I am proud to have been called their commander,” he said.

Nelson will now serve as the communications officer for the 153rd Engineer Battalion.